(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Government have set a target to achieve 80 million rural subscribers by 2010. Department of Information Technology has embarked upon a programme of setting up 100,000 Community Service Centres (CSCs) to cater to e-governance requirements of 600,000 villages in the country in a phased manner.

(b) and (c) Government have launched a scheme, through Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), for provision of support for setting up and managing 631 infrastructure sites spread over 70 districts in North-Eastern States for providing mobile services including other Wireless Access Services (WAS) in the specified rural and remote, areas, where there is no exisiting fixed wireless or mobile coverage. The Government has also approved a scheme for providing support for establishing 100,000 Broadband, Internet enabled, Common Services Centres (CSCs) in rural areas of the country including that of North-Eastern States. Department of Information Technology will implement the scheme in a public private partnership mode. The support for the North-East for this scheme has been pegged at 75% of the normative value as against national value of 33%.

Auction of spectrum

436. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Department of Telecommunications have written to Prime Minister on the issue of auction of spectrum;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that some foreign firms including Rookie Telecom and S. Tel have offered voluntarily to pay Rs. 6000 crore to DoT for allocation of spectrum;

(d) if so, details thereof; and

(e) the reasons that Government do not want to auction spectrum to telecom operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Communications have been sent to Prime Minister on issues related to licencing and allocation of spectrum aspects which includes, among others, licensing procedures, enhancement of subscribers linked spectrum allocation criteria, spectrum charges, use of dual technology by telecom service providers etc.

(c) and (d) M/s S. Tel Ltd., in their letter, have stated, among others, that "S Tel is of the view that the policy that was evolved when the industry was at its infancy, will not serve the public purpose now, when the industry is among the most advanced. Consistent with its knowledge and understanding of the business of telecom and the high value of spectrum, S. Tel comes forward voluntarily to pay additional revenue share to the extent of Rs. 6000 crores to the DoT, over the above the spectrum charges revenue share payable as per the existing policy, over a period of 10 years from the date of the spectrum allotment. This will bring into effect a prioritization model, which will fully subserve the larger public interest."

(c) The Government has decided to grant new Unified Access Services (UAS) Licences as per the existing policy.

Ratio of women employees in NIC

437. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased state:

(a) the ratio of men and women employees in different NICs;

(b) whether there is an imbalance against the women employees; and

(c) if so, steps being taken to employ more women in NIC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The ratio of men and women employees of NIC is 233:50 (4.66:1).

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Telephone facilities in Rajasthan

438. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased state:

(a) the number of blocks, gram panchayats and villages covered under telephone facility in State of Rajasthan by BSNL;

(b) by when telephone facilities will be provided to all the villages of Rajasthan; and

(c) the measures taken for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) As on 30-9-2007, Government has provided Village Public Telephones (VPTs) to 34,554 villages including Gram Panchayats.

(b) and (c) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) for provision of VPTs in remaining 12,386 unconnected villages in Rajasthan. This excludes villages having population less than 100, lying in thick forest areas/naxalite infested areas etc. As on 30-9-2007, out of 12,386 unconnected eligible villages in Rajasthan 10,696 villages have been provided with VPT facility and the remaining 1,690 villages will be provided with VPTs progressively by June, 2008.

Data thefts cases

†439. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased state:

(a) the number of data theft cases brought in the cognizance of Government during last three years;

(b) the action being taken in these cases; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.